Worksheet 1 Computing related legislation
Answers

Task 1

1. (a) Research the details of the eight principles of the Data Protection Act, 1998. You can find them, with explanations, at https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/data-protection-principles/

Bear in mind any changes arising from the General Data Protection Regulations and the UK's relationship with the EU and EEA.

(b) Who do you think is storing your personal details?

School, banks, local authority, social media sites, online shopping sites and anything you need to log into.

(c) Use the Information Commissioner's website https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/ to find out how to make a subject access request to verify data about yourself. Is it right that you should have to pay for this?

See https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/personal-information/, noting the exemptions, a charge of up to £10 and a 40-day response time, and that it applies to paper as well as computer records.

The charge is intended to cover the costs of retrieving and presenting the information and also deters vexatious requests.

It may also be interesting to compare the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. See https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/official-information/

(d) How might a future employer use openly available social profile details about you?

A simple search for a profile in your name (but is it you?) is easy to do and might reveal aspects of your life which you are proud of – your sports, volunteering and charity fund-raising; or other aspects. Employers may use these in assembling lists of people they would like to interview, or in preparing questions for people they do interview. If your profile makes them think of you as unreliable or irresponsible, would they bother to interview you?

2. The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 allows for the mass surveillance of communications, and requires Internet Service providers to give access to messages without telling their customers. Explain your own view on balancing national security against individual privacy in the context of digital communication.

The discussion should include arguments for as well as against surveillance, and could be linked to digital communication. Some students may give a justified personal view/summary/conclusion.

Intercepts of phone and email traffic are a powerful tool against organised criminals including terrorists and can unravel connections between conspirators. However, many citizens value privacy and some do not trust the government, who may monitor their political opponents, or fail to keep data confidential. RIPA had been used by some local authorities in connection with minor offences, which led to new rules. (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-local-authority-use-of-ripa). See also https://www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/human-rights/privacy/state-surveillance

Task 2

1. Find answers to these questions about **bitcoin**. You can look at the website whose address is given below, or search on Google.

http://www.coindesk.com/information/what-is-bitcoin/

(a) What is bitcoin?

A form of digital currency, created and held electronically. No one controls it. It's an example of a category of money known as cryptocurrency.

(b) Is bitcoin legal?

Yes, depending on what you're doing with it.

(c) Name 2 online stores that you can buy goods from using bitcoin.

Microsoft, Dell, many others

(d) Name 2 shops, hotels or restaurants that you can pay with bitcoin.

Holiday Inn in Brooklyn, NY; Spanish chain One Shot Hotels.

(e) Give two reasons why you might use bitcoin.

Faster than interbank transfer, cheap (minimal fees), more secure than credit card payments

(f) Name two illegal or questionable uses of bitcoin.

Gambling sites, illegal drug purchases

(g) Why is it used for illegal purchases?

Because transactions are untraceable

(h) Who created bitcoin?

A software developer called Satoshi Nakamoto

(i) What does this case study tell us about the power and responsibility of software developers?

Satoshi Nakamoto has developed software that has the potential to completely change the way people accept and receive payment for goods. You would need to think very carefully about possible consequences before launching software such as this. What is the likely future of Bitcoin?

Task 3

1. A group of insect rights activists have decided to leak the text of a forthcoming book, "Cockroach Control for Dummies" which they have downloaded from a publisher's server. They correctly guessed the password was "password123" for the account "admin". They have also downloaded a mailing list of direct customers, which includes names, addresses and past purchases, using the same account.

   However, after being overheard discussing their plans in a café, they find themselves being interviewed by the police.

   (a) What crimes might be involved? Imagine that you are a police officer preparing a summary of the issues involved, so that you can hold a meeting with the Crown Prosecution Service to discuss what charges, if any, should be brought.

   The Computer Misuse Act: Unauthorised access to computer material

   Unauthorised access with intent to commit or facilitate a crime (such as a copyright offence)

   The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 – in respect of the text of the book

   The Data Protection Act 1998 – but here it is the publishers who have failed to protect the personal details of their customers with reasonable security.

   (b) Organise a role-play of the initial stages of a trial in which lawyers present evidence from witnesses including the accused, the publisher, police officers and anyone else you feel should be involved. There will need to be a judge and a jury.

   The court will need to consider what offences have actually happened (CMA and DPA, but there will need to be evidence beyond reasonable doubt – and

it may be hard to prove which individual(s) did what. The breach of copyright does not seem to have happened, but there might be issues of conspiring to commit an offence.

The object of the role-play is to bring out the principles of the three statutes, not to deprive anyone of their liberty!